Telegraph, Oct. 30, 1988, "Aussie Girls Bus Ride Into History With Kennedy's Killer" by Michael Robotham. Pat Winston's telephone conversation came from notes I scribbled at the time. To be perfectly fair, I have not included information that she did add, which due to the speed of her conversation, I was unable to write down. My thanks must go to Chris Mills who instigated the idea and to my fellow Australian researcher Philip Hopley, who helped find her, then urged me on. Copyright. Enid Gray

*Revision of an article published in the British publication, Dealey Plaza Echo, November 1996.

## POSNER - THE EIGHTH COMMISSIONER

*by*
*R.F. Gallagher*

*All Hail Gerald Posner!*
*He has done the impossible—what had not been done in thirty years! He solved the JFK assassination case; what the Warren Commission, the FBI and CIA and all those other government agencies—and all the others who have written on the subject (which for almost all means more or less on the subject)—those Posner criticizes and condemns throughout, were not able to do. Thus, with his characteristic modesty, his title: Case Closed.*
*Harold Weisberg, CASE OPEN*

Gerald Posner, author of Case Closed, tells his readers that "Due to the bedlam at Dealey Plaza, many contradictory statements were produced from scores of witnesses resulting in conflicting accounts of what happened." Posner says that resolving every conflicting account is impossible. The author says, "Testimony closer to the event must be given greater weight than changes or additions made years later, when the witnesses' own memory is often muddled or influenced by television programs, films, books, and discussions with others." (p. 235)

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This is good advice, especially for those who write for posterity. Does Posner follow his own advice? Not always. In trying to solidify the concept that three shots were fired on November 22, 1963, we read from Case Closed: "Beyond the eyewitnesses already discussed, the author has discovered several people who saw the assassination and have never before testified or told their stories....most are now retired, some deceased, and their memories nearly three decades after the event are not what they would have been within days of the shooting. But their revelations are still pertinent. The six interviewed for this book each remembered hearing three distinct shots, and more important, three of them watched the assassination with a pair of binoculars." (pp. 261-262)

Posner tells us that six were interviewed for the book and three watched the event with binoculars, but leaves us in the dark as to who they were; except for one of them, Francine Burrows, who said she remembered three shots. Francine told Posner, "I was very close to him when he got shot. And I looked up at that window immediately [the southeast corner of the sixth floor of the Depository]. I knew instinctively 'that's where the shots came from'. She ran back to her office after the third shot, and she said she 'was in shock, just in shock—I didn't want to discuss it, I just wanted to forget it'." (p. 262)

And that's exactly what Francine did for thirty years; she didn't discuss it and she just forgot it. Thanks to Posner and Random House, Francine has come forward at last to help us close the case.

Even more interesting than Francine is another tardy witness, Travis Linn, once a reporter and now a professor of journalism. Posner says of Linn, "Despite his reluctance, he finally agreed to tell, for the first time publicly, the story of the only sound recording known to have made of the assassination." (p. 243)

It turns out that Linn had planted a tape recorded on one of the columns near the reflective pool at the corner of Houston and Elm Streets. He wanted to capture the sounds of the motorcade going by.

All went well until Linn transferred the recording to a reel-to-reel tape machine and don't you know, it erased itself. [Shades of Mission Impossible]. Not to worry; when asked if he heard the sounds of the shots on the tape when he played it back, Linn told Posner, "When I was dubbing it, I did hear three shots and they were rifle shots. I know rifles and pistols. There is no question about those sounds. They were huge over the crowd

noise...the first two, my recollection is, were close together and there was a slightly longer pause until the third one, as the guy hurried his shots, and then said, 'No, I am going to aim this time.'" (p. 244)

We are fortunate that Posner found Travis Linn before Oliver Stone discovered him. Here we have not only a witness to the tragic event, but someone who writes dialogue as well. Also, Linn was able to correct witnesses who reported that it was the last two shots that were close together with a longer pause after the first shot.

If Linn would have come forward at the time, he could have saved Secret Service Agent, Forest Sorrels, from giving false testimony to the Commission. Sorrels was in the lead car of the motorcade and when asked if he could testify to the spacing of the shots, Sorrels said, "Yes. There was to me about twice as much time between the first and second shots as there was between the second and third shots."

*MR. STERN. Can you estimate the overall time from the first shot to the third shot?*

*MR. SORRELS. Yes, I have called it out to myself. I have timed it, and I would say it was very, very close to six seconds.*

*MR. STERN. It sounds like you can still hear the shots.*

*MR. SORRELS. I will hear them forever. Vol VII, p. 345*

Posner criticizes testimony of witnesses who made statements within hours of the assassination, and uses Travis Linn thirty years later to describe the shots from a self-destructed tape and with the sequence of the shots in the wrong order.

What happened to the author's advise about testimony closer to the event being given greater weight than testimony made years later?

Case Closed? Maybe not.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**To the editor:** As one interested in the history and interpretation of photographic materials relating to the President Kennedy assassination, my attention was drawn to the article in January's issue of "The Fourth Decade" by Martha Moyer and R.F. Gallagher. Titled, "Where was Jack Ruby on November 21 and November 22," one major thrust of the article was to indicate that Ruby, contrary to his later assertions, was not at the Dallas Morning News building at the time of the assassination of President Kennedy. The authors noted that all the people who saw him in the building before and after the assassination did not explicitly state that he was there at the critical minutes around 12:30. Not having researched this aspect of the Ruby story, I will let others more familiar with the documentation debate this question.

My interest was piqued, however, when the two authors wrote, "We would argue that Jack Ruby was in the area of the Texas School Book Depository and not in the Dallas Morning News building at 12:30 p.m., the time of the shooting." According to the authors, Ruby apparently had something to do with the assassination conspiracy. And their proof of Ruby's being present at Dealey Plaza? The authors reproduced a transparency taken by amateur photographer Phil Willis which shows the front entrance of the Texas School Book Depository shortly after the assassination. In the right background of this slide is pictured a man who looks suspiciously like Jack Ruby. To bolster their speculation that it is Ruby, the authors give the reader the impression that two of Ruby's friends identified him in this picture, as well as in three others reproduced in their article which show Ruby at the Police Department later that Friday night. The authors offer no other photos or testimony of anyone else at the Book Depository who also saw Ruby—just this photo and the seeming corroboration of photo identification by Ruby associates.

Though the authors reproduced three of these Warren Commission photo exhibits (2441, 2442, and 2423) which Andrew Armstrong and George Senator were asked to examine to identify Ruby, the authors failed to illustrate exhibit 2424 which was the other photo the two men were shown for identification purposes. This photo exhibit shows a close, full frontal view of Ruby at the Police Department show-up room that Friday night. Contrary to the implication of the authors' statement, neither Senator nor Armstrong were shown the Willis slide taken at